

# MEMO

DATE: November 6, 2003  
TO: Regional Council  
FROM: Jennifer Merrick, Associate Planner, (213) 236-1926, merrick@scag.ca.gov  
SUBJECT: Environmental Scope for the Destination 2030 RTP PEIR

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## RECOMMENDED ACTION:

Receive and File

## SUMMARY:

As part of the PILUT process (Planning for Integrated Land Use and Transportation), the state-mandated Program Environmental Impact Report (EIR) has been coordinated with the RTP and Growth Visioning efforts. This integrated environmental review process is underway and making progress. The schedule below outlines the major milestones in the EIR process.

### RTP EIR Schedule:

June 5, 2003	RC approved release of the Notice of Preparation (NOP) of the EIR
June 13, 2003	NOP was circulated by the State Clearinghouse
September 16, 2003	Convened the Program EIR Scoping Meeting
October 2, 2003	EEC approved the scope and content for the Draft Program EIR
Nov 6, 2003	Update EEC on environmental evaluation of RTP/EIR Alternatives
December 4, 2003	EEC approves release of the Draft PEIR
December 15, 2003	Release Draft Program EIR
January 2004	Joint RTP/EIR Public Hearing
Late January 2004	Close of Public Comments for Draft Program EIR
March 15, 2004	Mail Response to comments to commenters
April 1, 2004	EEC approves and RC certifies the Final PEIR, Findings, and Overriding Considerations

## BACKGROUND:

The Notice of Preparation for the Destination 2030 PEIR was released on June 9, 2003, and was received and circulated by the State Clearinghouse (SCH) on June 13, 2003. The Energy and Environment Committee (EEC) and the Regional Council approved the initial environmental scope when they approved the release of the NOP. On October 2, 2003, the Energy and Environment Committee approved the final environmental scope of the Program Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for Destination 2030 RTP.

# MEMO

In response to NOP comments and a desire to encourage additional participation in the RTP PEIR process, SCAG held an RTP PEIR scoping meeting on September 16, 2003. Oral comments were accepted at the scoping meeting, and written comments were accepted until September 25, 2003.

The information below summarizes the scope of the Destination 2030 PEIR, as presented in the NOP and subsequent joint policy committee workshops with inclusion of comments staff received on the NOP.

As a Program EIR (PEIR), the Destination 2030 PEIR is a "first-tier" CEQA document written to consider "broad policy alternatives and program-wide mitigation measures" (CEQA Guidelines §15168). The document will evaluate regional-scale environmental effects, such as direct and indirect effects, growth-inducing impacts, and cumulative impacts. The PEIR will include alternatives and mitigation measures to offset potentially significant effects.

## Impact Categories Included in the PEIR:

The impact categories listed below are consistent with those in the NOP, with the exception of the addition of "Hazardous Materials" per an NOP comment received.

- 1) Land Use
- 2) Population, Employment, and Housing
- 3) Transportation
- 4) Air Quality
- 5) Water Resources
- 6) Noise
- 7) Public Service and Utilities
- 8) Cultural Resources
- 9) Biological Resources
- 10) Geology
- 11) Energy
- 12) Hazardous Materials
- 13) Visual/Aesthetic Resources

## Alternatives Included in the PEIR:

The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requires the evaluation of a "reasonable range" of alternatives to the proposed Plan. These alternatives must: 1) fulfill most of the basic objectives of the Plan, 2) be ostensibly feasible, and 3) reduce or minimize the adverse environmental effects of plan.

The Draft 2004 RTP and Draft Program EIR will evaluate a coordinated range of alternatives, each comprised of a set of transportation projects, programs, and strategies, and the growth projection resulting from their implementation.

# MEMO

The **No Project** alternative is a future scenario resulting from minimal improvements to the transportation system. Only those programmed transportation projects that have federal environmental clearance by 2002 are assumed. This fulfills the RTP Baseline and CEQA No Project requirements.

The **2001 RTP Modified** alternative is an update of the adopted 2001 RTP to reflect the most recent growth estimates and transportation planning decisions. For example, this alternative reflects the 8-mile CenterLine alignment adopted in July 2003 in Orange County, and it includes the Measure A local sales tax extension passed in November 2002 in Riverside County.

The **Growth Vision (Hybrid)** alternative builds upon the 2001 RTP Modified alternative by assuming additional transportation/land use strategies that encourage compact growth, increased jobs/housing balance, and centers-based development, where feasible, in all parts of the region.

The **PILUT 1 (Infill)** alternative builds upon the 2001 RTP Modified alternative by assuming additional transportation/land use strategies that encourage a substantial portion of future growth to concentrate in existing urban centers through infill and redevelopment. This alternative has been designed to reduce consumption of open space and habitat.

The **PILUT 2 (Fifth Ring)** alternative builds upon the 2001 RTP Modified alternative by assuming additional transportation/land use strategies that encourage growth toward a more decentralized urban form, and an improvement in the jobs/housing balance in the outlying areas of the region. Specifically, PILUT2 will focus on improving and expanding infrastructure to utilize undeveloped land on the outer edges of the urbanized area.

## Evaluation of Destination 2030, the Preferred Alternative:

The Regional Council selected the "Growth Vision" alternative as the Preferred Alternative in October 2003. The Preferred Alternative will be fully evaluated in the PEIR, for the impact categories listed above. Each of the additional alternatives will be analyzed as well. The alternatives analysis will focus on providing a means of making comparisons between the Preferred Alternative and each of the other alternatives.

The Draft PEIR is scheduled to be released to the Regional Council at the December 2003 meeting, followed by a 45-day public comment period. A joint public hearing on the RTP and the PEIR will be scheduled for winter 2004. The Final RTP and PEIR are scheduled to be adopted by the Regional Council in April 2004.

## FISCAL IMPACT:

The staff and consultant work associated with preparation of the PEIR are budgeted in work element 04-020.

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